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ABSTRACT

This document was produced as a position paper for background for a summit convened by the San Francisco Unified School District (California) to focus on the education and achievement of African American students. The Education Partnership Summit had the principal goal of developing strategies and techniques to increase the mathematics and reading performance of African American students in the school district. A secondary goal was to strengthen parental, community, peer, and teacher support for the achievement of African American students to equal the national average within 2 years. In addition to the principal address by the Superintendent of Schools and a plenary address by the Mayor of San Francisco, the Summit was to feature five major workshops, focusing reading and mathematics achievement, student attitudes and participation, parent participation, and increasing self-esteem and student achievement. The following sections provide information on topics to be explored in the Summit: (1) "Introduction"; (2) "Education Summit Workshops"; (3) "The African American Community and the San Francisco Unified School District"; (4) "A Brief Overview"; (5) "Judge Orrick and the Consent Decree"; (6) "Pursuing Educational Reform and Increasing Student Achievement"; (7) "The Effects of Poverty on Educational Achievement"; (8) "Overcoming Poverty"; (9) "Educational Failure and Imprisonment"; (10) "The Economic Rewards of Educational Achievement"; (11) "Effective Administrative Leadership"; (12) "Educational and Political Partnership To Increase Student Achievement"; (13) "Parental Involvement and Student Success"; and (14) "References." Appendixes include a list African American youth achievers in the school district, a description of successful program efforts to support African American youth achievers, and lists of Summit committee members and San Francisco Unified School District's Board of Education members. (Contains 31 references.) (SLD)

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ED 421 561

POSITION PAPER

of

The San Francisco Unified School District's

AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP SUMMIT: Focusing on Reading & Mathematics Achievement

CONVENERS

Dr. Waldemar Rojas, Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Keith Jackson, President, Board of Education

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INTRODUCTION

The importance of the San Francisco Unified School District's Summit focusing on the education and achievement of African American students cannot be overemphasized. This Summit represents a major and determined effort of educators, parents, and community leaders to unite in the goal of improving the academic achievement of African American children. This academic achievement Summit called by the community and the SFUSD should be seen as a critical phase of the ongoing, joint quest of the African American community and the San Francisco Unified School District to ensure that their children receive the best education possible. The Summit should also be seen as a concerted effort to consolidate and further the progress of African American students.

This Education Partnership Summit will have one principal goal: To develop strategies and techniques to significantly increase the math and reading performance of the San Francisco African American children. A secondary goal is to strengthen parental, community, peer and teacher support for the achievement of African American students to equal the national average within the next two years. Subsidiary or supporting objectives to achieve this goal include:

1. Increasing overall academic achievement;
2. Reducing the placement of African-American students in special education classes;
3. Reducing suspensions and expulsions;
4. Reducing dropout rates for African-American students;
5. Increasing the graduation rate and college attendance of African-American students; and
6. Increased rate in class attendance.

EDUCATION SUMMIT WORKSHOPS

In addition to the principal address of Superintendent Rojas and a plenary address by Mayor Willie L. Brown, the Summit will focus on 5 major workshops.

These focus areas are:

1. Improving Reading Achievement;
2. Improving Math Achievement;
3. Increasing Student Retention, Classroom Participation and Strategies for Success;
4. Increasing Parent, Family and Community Involvement and Support;
5. Increasing Self-Esteem and Student Achievement.

Nationally recognized experts on each of these subject areas will be leading the workshops. These experts will share and explain strategies that have proved effective in raising the educational performance of African American students. They will also provide assistance to Summit participants in developing strategies specifically designed to achieve the goals of the Summit.

THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY AND THE SFUSD--A BRIEF OVERVIEW

In matters of school reform, the San Francisco Unified School District is in the forefront both locally and nationally in promoting research-based educational strategies to improve student achievement. The development and successful implementation of early literacy and math activities, for example, are a direct result of strong community involvement and input. The task of the Summit will be to build upon the successes of educational reform and to develop related strategies that teachers, community leaders, and parents can use to promote academic success in the unique environment of the San Francisco Unified School District. Underlying the commitment to student achievement will be the development of parent ownership, responsibility and accountability as it relates to the education of their children.

The San Francisco Unified School District is the state's fifth largest school district. Like the city itself, the SFUSD is multicultural, multilingual, and one of the most diverse public school systems in the nation. There are more than 60 nationalities represented among the district's

students. African American students make up 17.7 percent of a student body of nearly 64,000 students. The remaining student body includes Chinese students, who make up 26.9 percent of the student body, Latinos, 20.9 percent; Whites, 13.1 percent; Filipinos, 7.4 percent; Japanese, 1.0 percent; Koreans, 1.1 percent; American Indians, 0.7 percent; and Samoans, 0.6 percent.

The San Francisco African American community has a long history of participating in the education process, and, when necessary, challenging the policy-makers to do what is required to enhance the academic performance of African American students in the public schools. In 1962, for example, the local chapter of Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) called on the school board to desegregate the district and thereby establish a more racially balanced composition of schools throughout the district (Kirp, 1982). From 1963 to 1978 the African American community engaged in both protesting and filing lawsuits in an effort to get the school board and the district to meet the needs of San Francisco's African American school children.

Although some progress occurred during this period, improvements were not substantive in the academic achievement of African American students. As a consequence the NAACP filed another lawsuit against the school district in 1978 (San Francisco NAACP v. the SFUSD, 1983). This lawsuit centered on the fact that 1) the Bayview-Hunter's Point Hunters Point schools were still heavily racially segregated, 2) these schools were being denied the resources allocated to other schools in the district, and 3) the students in these schools were continuing to perform poorly academically (Fraga et al.,1997).

Federal District Judge William H. Orrick was assigned this case. It took more than four years of litigation and negotiation before a consent decree was reached in May, 1983.

JUDGE ORRICK AND THE CONSENT DECREE

The 1983 Consent Decree is still operative today, and it is a major component in moving the San Francisco School District to take the necessary measures to improve the academic performance of African American students. As Michael Casserly, executive director of the Council of Great City Schools, noted in a recent *Los Angeles Times* article, the power of the court is "the glue that other {school districts} don't have" (Woo, August 27, 1997).

The 1983 Consent Decree is a landmark agreement. This is so because the Decree not only requires the desegregation of the schools but it also requires that desegregation be linked to the increased academic achievement of African American students in the San Francisco Unified School District. With this in mind, the court recommended that the parties look beyond desegregation as a panacea to increase academic success among African American children. The parties were challenged to look at the other major factors that impinge upon a child's ability to learn. One challenge found in the Consent Decree is for the City of San Francisco and the SFUSD to develop a strategy to improve **affordable housing** for the urban residents.

Better coordination of public housing is a concern because in San Francisco, 61 percent of students living in public housing are African American. New trends in rebuilding public housing stock ultimately displace public housing residents, thus having an adverse impact on African American children. The provision of affordable housing could help stem the tide of residents leaving San Francisco because of increasing housing costs. Secondly, to the extent that poor families are overspending for housing costs, they are decreasing the number of dollars available for other family necessities, such as books and school supplies. Also, poverty and poor housing stock have been identified as major impediments to academic performance and success. (See page 9 of this report.) City and School officials in the State of California must come together to provide, among other

things, affordable housing for minorities. This is one among many factors that can help improve the chances of minorities achieving academic success.

Judge Orrick took (and continues to maintain) a strong and progressive stand on the need to see desegregation as only a means to an end. In other words, desegregation was to be implemented as a means to promote and achieve academic excellence for African American and all other children in the school district. It is Judge Orrick's insistence on linking desegregation and higher academic performance that makes the 1983 Consent Decree a historic one that stands apart from nearly all other school desegregation rulings (Fraga et al.).

Also, the Decree assigned various responsibilities for implementing the provisions of the agreement. Included in these provisions was a special educational plan the SFUSD was to use in upgrading the schools in Bay View Hunters Point. Additionally, the court with recommendations from the attorneys for the various parties, appointed a Consent Decree team consisting of nationally known educational experts to assist the court in monitoring the District's progress in implementing the Consent Decree.[1]

PURSUING EDUCATIONAL REFORM AND INCREASING STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

The desired outcome of educational reform is to improve student academic achievement using effective teaching and learning strategies. The strategy of pursuing academic excellence is firmly rooted in the theories and concepts of effective schooling as developed by Ronald Edmonds, 1979; Wilbur Brookover and Charles Beady, 1979; and other research scholars.

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[1] The Committee Chairperson is Gary Orfield, Professor of Education, Harvard University. Other Committee members are Professor Robert L. Green, Michigan State University, Professor Laureen Chew, San Francisco State University, Gwen Stephens, California State Department of Education, Professor David Ramerez, California State University at Long Beach, and Hoover Liddell, Consultant to the San Francisco Board of Education.

All children can learn is the guiding principle behind effective schooling theory. Two important findings of effective schooling research has shown that students can achieve academic success regardless of their race or income levels.

Effective teaching and learning strategies demand that the schools help create a total learning environment where:

- Teachers hold high expectations for their students' success;
- Students want teachers who engage them with interesting ways to learn, and who encourage and praise them when they excel academically.
- Teachers show a caring attitude toward students and parents are involved in the teaching-learning process.

Teachers have a major impact on students' educational performance according to the results of a recent survey published in the Cleveland *Plain Dealer* [daily newspaper] (September 22, 1997). Quality of teaching was rated major by 88 percent of the respondents while the home life of the student was rated major by 83 percent of respondents. Other areas receiving major ratings and percentages include parental involvement in the schools, 79 percent; community involvement in the schools, 67 percent; how discipline is handled, 78 percent; physical condition of buildings, 57 percent; how safe students feel in school, 75 percent; and number of students per teacher, 72 percent. Regardless of the major ratings assigned to each of these factors, each is important in its impact on a student's academic performance. The leadership in the schools must make sure that each of these factors is given appropriate consideration in the management of the school environment.

Additionally, six factors were generally used in grading the teachers. High grades were given by parents for teachers who:

A. treat the child with respect, 85 percent;

B. are available when needed to speak with them, 80 percent;

C. challenge the child to learn, 76 percent;

D. assign appropriate homework, 76 percent;

E. give enough feedback on the child's performance, 73 percent;

F. give enough individual attention to the child, 63 percent.

Effective leadership must also be committed to providing support to teachers and parents in pursuing the goal to maximize student academic achievement. Effective educational leaders must also realize that improved quality of classroom teaching through more well-trained and educated teachers are indispensable components of educational reform. In the SFUSD, school reform is achieved through Reconstitution. For more information about School Reconstitution, please refer to a speech by Waldemar Rojas, Superintendent of Schools in the San Francisco School District.[2]

African American Teacher Recruitment and School Reform. It would be helpful to explore incentives to attract the best and brightest teachers to the SFUSD. While we applaud the school system for attracting the best and brightest non-minorities, the challenge lies ahead to attract qualified African American teachers, especially from predominantly black colleges, such as Morehouse and Spelman Colleges, Howard University, Florida A&M University, Tennessee State University, and Hampton University. Young and bright African American teachers at every school level who themselves are sensitive to the needs of African American youth can help sensitize other teachers to their needs.

Research has indicated that a majority of the teachers in the inner cities are non-minorities who either are from or live in a suburban or rural setting. Therefore, in many instances it is difficult for them to relate to the urban environment and its effect upon many of the students. There are currently teacher training models that can be expanded upon by

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[2] "Research and Experience: the Background to School Reconstitution, A Strategic and Research-based Approach to School Reform." by Waldemar Rojas. A speech given February 18, 1997 at the Carter Center in Atlanta.

local colleges and universities in which teacher internships become a significant part of the student teacher educational experience. Developing partnerships between successful urban teachers and student interns would ensure that young teachers entering urban classrooms would not find the experience to be a difficult one from an academic and cultural point of view, mounting frustration over the continued academic failure of African American students. Attracting competent teachers to each classroom must be seen as a significant aspect of school reform.

In San Francisco, reform evolved from the city's African American educators, community leaders, and attorneys who encouraged the concept of school reform. Judge Orrick, like San Francisco's African American community, saw the need for radical action to be taken to improve African American student academic performance, and thus he gave court sanction to this new reform strategy (SF NAACP v. SFUSD).

Six schools in the Bayview-Hunter's Point Hunters Point neighborhoods were selected as the first to be involved in a major educational reform effort known as **Reconstitution.** These school are Dr. Charles Drew, Sir Francis Drake, and George Washington Carver elementary schools; Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Horace Mann middle schools; and Philip Burton High.

It can be stated without reservation that educational reform has been highly successful in improving academic achievement for African American students in those schools. For example, a 1992 committee of experts report required by the Judge Orrick showed that African American students in the reformed schools performed significantly higher on standardized tests (the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills {CTBS}) than African American students in non-reformed schools (Orfield, et al).

Perhaps more significant, African American students in reformed schools achieved higher scores on the CTBS than students in any other schools except magnet/alternative schools and those schools with special-selective admission criteria (Orfield, et al).

Most importantly, African American students at these reformed schools continue to show improved academic performance. Students at George Washington Carver Elementary, for example, had a math score of 53.6 on the 1997 CTBS; more than 3 points above the national average. Both Horace Mann and Martin Luther King Jr. Middle Schools had math and reading scores not far below the national average: 49.7 and 47.5 in math and 48.8 and 48.4 in reading, respectively for the schools. Clearly, these scores are well above the African American student district average scores of 38.0 in math and 39.5 in reading.

In addition to improved academic performance, African American students in reformed schools have benefited in other ways as well. Specifically, African American students in reformed schools have lower dropout rates, lower rates of placement in special education classes, and lower suspension and expulsion rates than do African American students district wide.

These kinds of positive results are generating a growing national interest in the strategy of educational reform. The Cleveland Public Schools, for example, have begun this school year to implement educational reform at two of the elementary schools in its system (The *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, August 22, 1997; Green, 1993). Reform efforts are also in place in Houston, Texas and the Chicago, Illinois public schools.

However, despite the notable achievements of reform in the San Francisco schools, African American parents, teachers, community leaders, and educational leaders are all in agreement that these accomplishments are not enough. Much more must be done to raise the achievement levels of African American students to levels equal to the national

average. As the San Francisco African American community and the School District work to accomplish this goal, it is important to understand that the issue of poor academic performance by African American students is a national problem. One element that contributes significantly to this problem is the high levels of poverty that affect wide sectors of the African American community.

THE EFFECTS OF POVERTY ON EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

The national poverty rate for African Americans is 33 percent. This is more than two and a half times the 12 percent poverty rate for Whites (Bennett, 1995). Worse, the poverty for African American children is 46 percent. This means that nearly one out of every two African American children live in poverty. These statistics mean that poor African Americans typically live in a density of poverty three to four times higher than that of poor Whites (Jaynes and Williams, 1989).

The effects of this lack of income and resources are multiple and varied, including the impact on the education of poor children. Research has shown that when children are not properly fed, clothed, housed, and feel insecure, they spend less time on task. They either skip school and/or do not complete homework or the other work required to be an academically successful student. Herein lies a challenge for all stakeholders. As the Department of Education states, "The effects of poverty on children's education is well documented. **Low achievement**, **high dropout rates**, and **poor educational performance** are highly correlated with **poverty.**" (National Center for Education Statistics, 1991).

The U.S. Department of Education lists six factors associated with poor performance in school from The National Center for Education Statistics, 1991, 1997:

1. Parents without a high school diploma.
2. Limited English proficiency.

3. Income less than $15,000.
4. Having a sibling who has dropped out of high school. (Modeling)
5. A child being home alone for more than three hours a day.
6. Children living in single-parent households.

It should be noted that there is a growing body of research literature indicating that single parents can successfully raise their children, many becoming excellent students. The literature also indicates that two parents in a functional partnership will have greater success in producing excellent students (Liontos, 1991).

Many of these risk factors are strongly associated with families in the African American and other communities of poverty. A terrible consequence of these factors is that as many as one of every two African American children may not be prepared to learn when they enter school (McBay, 1992). The problems of poverty and low educational achievement are often compounded by a lack of high-quality educational opportunities within the schools in poorer neighborhoods. Again, the Department of Education notes that, "Differences in the learning climate or in the distribution of resources between high and low poverty schools have a disproportionate impact on minorities, as racial/ethnic minorities are far more likely to attend high poverty schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997).

OVERCOMING POVERTY

The San Francisco Unified School District believes that with dedication to the principles of effective schools research, the conditions of poverty are <u>not</u> an insurmountable barrier to academic success. For example, SFUSD elementary schools, Malcolm X Academy and Dr. George Washington Carver Academic, located in low income neighborhoods have consistently scored at or above the 50th percentile (NCE). In essence, teachers, administrators, parents, and community leaders in San Francisco are

well aware of the many obstacles to increasing the academic performance of African American students. It was the determination to overcome these obstacles and conditions of poverty that led to the protracted legal battle that resulted in the Consent Decree. These and other initiatives represent the steadfast determination of San Francisco's African American community to ensure that African American students have the maximum opportunity and appropriate living environments to achieve academic success, regardless of socioeconomic status.

Without such opportunities, as Green (1977) stated long ago, poorly educated African American youth, end up "imprisoned by barriers of race, poverty, low self-esteem, academic failure, and minimal skills." However, the social imprisonment that Green spoke about then has today become in ever alarming numbers the literal imprisonment of African American youth, particularly African American males.

EDUCATIONAL FAILURE AND IMPRISONMENT

The number of African American males in prison continues to swell. There are 471,583 African American males in prison. This number represents 52 percent of the prison population. By contrast there are 438,453 White males in state and federal prisons (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1996).

Nationally, nearly one third (32.2 percent) of young African American males between the ages of 20-29 are under some form of criminal justice supervision--be it in prison, in jail, on probation, or on parole (Mauer and Huling, 1995).

As bad, however, as these national criminal justice figures are, they are even worse for African American males in California. **Indeed, California has become a major incarceration center for African American males.** A study last year showed that almost 40.0 percent of African American males 20-29 were under some form of criminal

justice control in California (*The Plain Dealer*, [Cleveland, Ohio newspaper] February 13, 1996). A significant part of this over representation of African American males is a direct result of the discriminatory practices of prosecutors and other officials involved in the criminal justice process. From 1986 to 1995, for example, not one White offender was convicted of a crack cocaine offense in federal courts in Los Angeles California, even though Whites comprise the majority of crack users (Weikel, 1995).

It is important to note that a rapidly growing number of African American women are also being ensnared in the criminal justice system. There are 30,089 African American women in prison, compared to 27,714 White women. California leads all other states in the number of female prisoners (Mauer and Huling). These statistics illustrate that California has become a leading state in the incarceration of young African American men and women.

Another fact that must be pointed out is the close connection between low educational achievement and imprisonment rates. A 1990 study of 200 African American youth incarcerated in the Atlanta Youth Development Center found that only 37 percent of these youth had completed 12th grade (Coggins, 1990). Similarly, a Bureau of Justice study found that approximately 50 percent of the inmates in state prisons had less than an 11th grade education. In fact, in many state prisons as much as 70 percent of the inmate population is believed to be illiterate (Bureau of Justice, 1990). Kidder (1990) notes that aside from race, illiteracy may be the strongest common denominator among all prisoners. There can be little doubt that many of the inmates in California prisons are school dropouts. It is equally likely that some of these prisoners are former dropouts from the San Francisco Bay area public school systems.

To reduce the possibility of African American students later becoming ensnared in the criminal justice system, acknowledging the 60 percent not so ensnared, parents, peers, teachers and administrators must continue to unite in a committed effort to promote

higher levels of academic success among African American youth. We see all to well what the alternative is. As Green (1992) has stated, "If the African American male is not in high school, he will not be on the college campus, but will surely be unemployed or, much worse, involved in crime." With varying degrees of intensity this statement is equally true for African American females. On the other hand, the better educated African American youth are the ones with better chances of succeeding in life.

THE ECONOMIC REWARDS OF EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

It is an irrefutable fact that African Americans with a B.A. or better have much higher income levels than those with only a high school diploma or less. For example, the median income in 1994 for full-time African American employees who were high school graduates was $18,460. The majority of these workers, 55 percent, had earnings below $20,000 a year. By contrast, the median income for African American employees with at least a B.A. was $32,360 a year. In other words, African Americans with a degree earned at least 62 percent more in salary than African Americans without a higher education (Bennett).

The income disparity in the United States for all ethnic groups is growing wider between the better educated and those with little or inadequate education. This is because the service-oriented, globalized economy of today increasingly requires well-trained, well-educated employees. Unlike twenty or thirty years ago there are few of the high-paying jobs once available to unskilled workers.

The shrinkage of these employment opportunities has affected many sectors of the country, but the impact has been most severe on African Americans, and particularly on African American males. As jobs have disappeared from the inner cities, the earnings of African American men (and women) have steadily decreased. Unemployment rates for young African American men and women are consistently two and a half to three times

higher than those for Whites. Discrimination is no doubt part of the reason for such disparity, but the lack of skills and education is also a critical factor in these higher rates of unemployment (Austin, 1996; Wilson, 1996). Such evidence strongly indicates that the single most important means for young African American males and females to improve their financial prospects is to obtain a higher education (Green, 1996). It is important for teachers, administrators, and counselors to instill in young African American students the **important link connecting education, income, and prosperity.**

Additionally, the benefits of higher education extend well beyond increased income opportunities. There is much research to show that with improved income levels for African American males, marriage rates increase in the African American community. A study by Sum and Fogg (1989) shows that in 1987 only 3 percent of African American males aged 18-29 with no annual earnings were married, and only a 7 percent marriage rate for African American males with $5,000 or less in annual earnings. The marriage rate rose to 29 percent for African American males with earnings between $10,000 to $15,000 a year, and 39 percent for males earning $15,000 to $20,000 a year. The rate was over 50 percent for African American males who earned over $20,000 a year. Similar findings between income levels and marriage rates have been found by researchers such as Wilson (1987). Therefore, the likelihood of a child having two parents to support the child-rearing process is enhanced by income.

Educational achievement becomes more important as we consider its impact on both individual income potential and on African American family life. These are two of the important reasons that educational attainment is a subject given great emphasis by the National Task Force on African American Men and Boys. Funded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation in Battle Creek, Michigan, the Task Force has over the last several years held meetings and conferences with a broad range of parents, scholars, educators, youth organizations, and community leaders around the country. The various recommendations of these groups and the analyses and research findings of Task Force members were

compiled into a book entitled *Repairing the Breach: Key Ways to support Family Life, Reclaim Our Streets, and Rebuild Civil Society in America's Communities* (Austin, 1996).

This important work stresses many of the same issues that are central to the Education Summit, such as:

1. The need to raise the educational achievement levels of African American students.
2. The importance of African American students being better trained in subjects such as math, literacy, science and computer science.
3. The vital need for schools to develop strong partnerships with local communities.

Repairing the Breach also emphasizes the fact that higher educational achievement for African American youth is a primary means of overcoming the "growing mismatch between the demands of the marketplace and the skills and educational level of {many} African Americans." Just as importantly, this book sees well-educated youth as being key leaders in helping to promote a civic dialogue among varied community elements, and in helping the African American community to rebuild and restore local institutions, and restore a greater civility and sense of the common good within the African American community (Austin).

Both the work of the National Task Force on African-American Men and Boys and the book *Repairing the Breach* are a consequence of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation's great interest in and encouragement of leadership development. The Foundation understands the pivotal role that skilled, experienced leadership plays in overcoming the particular problems faced by a group, a community, or a nation.

The history of parents and community representatives working to improve

educational outcomes for their children attests to the committed leadership within the San Francisco African American community.

EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP

As noted earlier, Effective Schooling research shows that students have a much better chance to succeed when administrative leaders show a strong commitment to promoting academic achievement. Such commitment is reflected by such actions as superintendents and other administrative leaders:

1. Providing students with skilled teachers who hold high expectations for student success.
2. Holding teachers and staff responsible for student achievement.
3. Providing ongoing staff development training.
4. Providing, resources to ensure student success at the highest possible levels.

The SFUSD leadership with the support of the school board, has shown its commitment to educational achievement by implementing these practices as well as others, which include:

1. Reducing class sizes in the first through third grades.
2. Providing unqualified support for accountability systems.
3. Revising teacher training programs to emphasize better classroom instruction in math, literacy, and science.

The success of such programs has allowed the District to increase reading and math scores for the fifth consecutive year. Furthermore, for the second year in a row, districtwide math and reading scores exceeded the national average. No other large urban school district has such a record of consistently high levels of achievement (Woo, 1997).

Although African American (and Latino) students are not performing as well as other groups, it should be kept in mind that African American student scores have generally improved over the last five years. Additionally, to provide a comparative perspective, it should be pointed out that the reading scores of 38.0 and the math score of 39.5 for African American students in the SFUSD place them at the very top levels for the district-wide scores for all students in other urban school systems. Moreover, the SFUSD district-wide reading and math scores for African American students are well above such scores for the great majority of African American students in other large urban school districts (Woo, 1997; Green, 1993).

Despite, however, the relative improvements in African American students scores, Superintendent Rojas has pledged to bring about even more substantial improvements. The Superintendent has publicly stated that his top priority is to raise the achievement scores of African American (and Latino) students to the national average by the spring of school year 1999. The achievement of this unprecedented goal would without question make African American students in San Francisco the highest performing African American students in the nation.

In working to accomplish this goal, the superintendent will seek the active cooperation and participation of parents, educators, peers and community leaders. He will also continue to work cooperatively with the court-appointed team of experts to fulfill the requirements of the Consent Decree.

EDUCATIONAL AND POLITICAL PARTNERSHIP TO INCREASE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

A significant meeting occurred on Friday, September 5, 1997, which wedded political and academic strength committed to the academic achievement of African American students. In this meeting, Superintendent Rojas and Mayor Willie L. Brown agreed that the education of African American students in San Francisco is a major

priority. Mayor Brown fully agreed with the need and the importance of taking further steps to improve the educational achievement of African American students.

The Mayor expressed his full support for the goals of the Summit, and he offered to provide staff assistance to help ensure that the Summit is a success.

Mayor Brown's many years of successful legislative experience and his national political stature will be of great benefit to the San Francisco School Unified School District. In cities such as Chicago and Cleveland, the school systems have been placed under the control of the mayors because the school boards and the school administrations were fragmented, ineffective, and fraught with politics. The San Francisco School administration, however, is seen as creative, clear-sighted, and programmatically effective. As a consequence, Mayor Brown's office and the SFUSD are in partnership to educate the District's children.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND STUDENT SUCCESS

African American parents are also powerful and indispensable allies in the comprehensive effort to increase student achievement. The theme of the Education Partnership Summit is ***ownership, responsibility,* and *accountability.***

Ownership includes, for example, meaningfully participating in events within parental control, such as attending parent-teacher conferences or reading at home with elementary or middle school children. ***Responsibility*** includes such acts as monitoring homework assignments to make sure they are completed and done properly. ***Accountability*** for parents means that they will assume responsibility for home-centered tasks related to the child's educational development, and will evaluate them on how well they have performed those tasks.

One immediate task that African American parents can assume is an essential one of making sure that their children attend school, class, and complete their homework assignments. District records show that in both middle and high schools African American students have the lowest attendance rates of any racial or ethnic group. Chinese students' attendance is more than twice that of African American students, 76.4 percent to 32.0 percent. And the groups with lowest attendance rates, African American, Latinos, and American Indians, all have the lowest grade-point averages. On the other hand, the groups with highest attendance rates, Japanese, Chinese, and Koreans, all have the highest grade-point averages.

These statistics suggest that one of the remedies for lower achievement is greater class attendance and participation. Parents can play a major role in achieving this objective.

Although the focus in this section has been on parents, the concepts of ***ownership***, ***responsibility***, and ***accountability*** apply as well to all other sectors of the African American community in the San Francisco School District. This includes educators, community representatives, political and business leaders.

Broadly speaking, ***parental*** ownership, responsibility, and accountability indicate that the San Francisco African American community will be as demanding of itself as it is of teachers and school administrators. These concepts mean that the African American community will provide the same commitment to raising educational achievement as the community asks educators to provide. This could mean, for example, African American men and women being mentors to African American students, or it could mean business leaders setting up internships or work study programs for African American youth. In total, these partnerships between the stakeholders will measurably increase the academic achievement of African American students.

With regard to the Education Partnership Summit itself, *ownership*, *responsibility*, and *accountability* mean that participants will come to the Summit with a commitment to engage in serious discussion, to develop effective strategies and techniques and to follow through on the implementation of these strategies and techniques.

The role of the African American Religious Community has been instrumental in supporting the quality of life of the African American community. During these times of educational crises, the church and other religious institutions, once again, can be instrumental in making a positive contribution to the academic achievement of African American children. Some models of involvement include churches, mosques, and temples making their underutilized facilities available for daycare and educational enrichment experiences for the children and the community. Through other community outreach efforts the religious organizations can help to provide educational experiences that involve the parents and their children (Green, 1982).

Ministers, pastors and the religious leadership are being sought as full partners in this effort to increase educational opportunities and greater educational achievement for San Francisco's African American students. The Young African American Achievers Program model involving Jones United Methodist Church , Providence Baptist Church, San Francisco Christian Center, Bethel AME Church in concert with Ella Hill Hutch Community Center is a prototype of this type of effective, collaborative effort.

CONCLUSION

For the past fourteen years, the San Francisco African American community has been consistent in its goals to improve the achievement of African American students. The support of the local branch of the NAACP, local religious institutions, many citizens of good will, Mayor Willie Brown, the court and finally, the committed leadership of its current school superintendent Dr. Waldemar Rojas and the school board, is an

indispensable partnership to achieve the goals of the Summit. Now the African American community and Superintendent Rojas have set before themselves a major challenge: To raise the math and reading scores of African American students to the national average within the next two years. This great challenge also represents a great opportunity. It provides the goals and the purpose for the various segments of the community--parents, educators, community leaders, and school administrators--to unite in a common effort to ensure that African American children succeed academically. For it is well understood that if African American succeed academically, they will have a far greater chance of succeeding in life.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

AFRICAN AMERICAN YOUTH ACHIEVERS IN THE SAN FRANCISCO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

The following students are high achievers and are model student representatives in the San Francisco Unified School District. They have been selected because they have distinguished themselves in the following areas:

a. **Grade Point Average (G.P.A.)**
b. **Academic Achievement (Honors)**
c. **Student/Extracurricular Activities**
d. **Community Service/Leadership**

Kewanda Williams: 12th grade, Lowell High School
G.P.A.: 3.58
Academic Achievement: Shield Honor Society; California Scholarship Federation
Activities: Kermesse Multicultural Fair, Medical Explorers Club
Community Service: Volunteer, Laguna Honda Hospital, Ambassador, DeYoung Museum

Demetra Ryan: 12th grade, Lowell High School
Academic Achievement: African American Community and Superintendent's Honor Roll
Activities: Student Government, Black Student Union, Lowell Advanced Choir
Leadership: Lowell Executive Council Treasurer
Community Service: Thanksgiving Food Drive/Homeless Feeding, Glide Memorial Food Drive

Jamil Sheared: 12th grade, Lowell High School
Academic Achievement: Honor Roll
Activities: Symphonic Band, Black Student Union, JROTC Drum and Bugle Corps
Leadership: Commander, Drum and Bugle Corps; Freedom Foundation Youth Leadership
Community Service: Tutor at Third Baptist Church

Tikia Tramalc Yelverton: 11th grade, Raoul Wallenberg Traditional High School
G.P.A.: 3.53
Academic Achievement: Superintendent's African American Honor Roll, AP student
Activities: Basketball, Track and Field, Cross Country
Leadership: President, Black Students Union, Treasure Bible Club
Community Service: YMCA Volunteer; Youth Choir, Words of Faith Church

SFUSD African American Student Achievers (Cont.)

Marcus A. Thompson: Grade 12, Raoul Wallenberg Traditional High School
GPA: 3.38
Academic Achievement: Superintendent's African American Honor Roll, AP Student
Activities: Baseball, Basketball, Band, Track & Field
Leadership: Black Students Union
Community Service: Volunteer, YMCA

Brandy Fontenot: 12th grade, J. Eugene McAteer High School
GPA: 3.03
Academic Achievement: Honor Roll, Bay Area Urban League Recipient
Activities: Student Council, S.F. Youth Commission, African American Retention Program
Leadership: Vice President, Senior Class; Black Student Union - Conflict Manager

Talia McClure: 12th grade, J. Eugene McAteer High School
GPA: 3.7
Academic Achievement: Young African American Achievers Luncheon, AP Student
Activities: Environmental Club, Students for Positive Action at McAteer, Varsity Cheerleader
Leadership: Elected Student Body President, Senior Class Pres., BSU Secretary
Community Service: Prevention Leadership Alternatives for Youth Community Advocate

Deoaunta Lyons: 11th grade, Eugene McAteer High School
GPA: 3.50
Academic Achievement: Honor Roll
Activities: Cornerback, Football Team
Community Service: Neighborhood Gardening, Inner City Youth program, Providence Baptist

Monica Bussey: Thurgood Marshall Academic High School
Academic Achievement: Academic Scholarship Award, Honors Student
Activities: Spirit Squad (Cheerleader)
Leadership: Teen Leader, Sorority Zinos-Teen Chapter of Phi Delta Kappa
Community Service: Sunday School Teacher

Gary Anderson: 8th grade, Gloria R. Davis Academic Middle School
G.P.A.: 4.0
Academic Achievement: Honor Roll, Awards in Math and Science
Activities: Football, Track, Art
Leadership: Student Council, Class President
Community Service: Bayview Foundation Cleanup Program

SFUSD African American Student Achievers (Cont.)

Joshua Bloom: 10th grade, Thurgood Marshall Academic High School
G.P.A.: 4.0
Academic Achievement: Honors Student
Activities: Baseball Team, Karate, U.S.A.
Leadership: Member, Principal's Cabinet,
Community Service: Fund raising support for Los Altos Charlie Rose Baseball League

Danielle Bracy: 8th grade, Gloria R. Davis Academic Middle School
G.P.A.: 4.0
Academic Achievement: Honor Roll, Awards in Math and Language Arts
Activities: Softball, Choir, Cheerleader, Talent Show
Leadership: Vice President, 7th Grade; Conflict Manger
Community Service: Sabbath Day Class Teacher

Ceirin Connolly-Ingram: 8th grade, Gloria R. Davis Academic Middle School
G.P.A.: 4.0
Academic Achievement: African American Honor Roll; Awards in Math and Science
Activities: Baseball, Columbia Boys and Girls Club
Leadership: Vice President, Student Council; Conflict Manager
Community Service: Peer Tutor

Ikheem Rhodes: 7th grade, Martin Luther King Jr. Academic Middle School
G.P.A.: 4.0
Academic Achievement: Honor Roll March for African American Students
Activities: Baseball, Basketball, Soccer
Leadership: Class President and Representative

Natrina Johnson: 8th grade, Martin Luther King, Jr. Academic Middle School
G.P.A.: 4.0
Academic Achievement: 2nd place San Francisco Essay Winner; African American Honor Roll
Activities: Cooperative Developmental Energy Program, MESA, Summerbridge
Community Service: Senior Center Volunteer

Jonathan Gerald Dyson: 12th grade, Washington High School
Academic Achievement: Honor Roll
Activities: Varsity Football
Leadership: Teacher's Aide
Community Service: Active in First AME Zion Church

SFUSD African American Student Achievers (Cont.)

Dewayne Bradford: 12th grade, Washington High School
Academic Achievement: Honor Roll
Community Service: Salvation Army
Activities: Workability I (University of California S.F.)

Edward Rivera: 12th grade, Mission High School
Academic Achievement: Honor Roll for African American Achievers Award
Leadership: President, African American Retention Program; Vice President, BSU African American Leadership Conference Award
Community Service: Involved in peer counseling; tutors at local elementary school
Activities: Basketball team, Chorus

Maurice Crayton: 12th Grade, Burton Academic High School
GPA: 3.17
Academic Achievement: Honor Roll, Principal's Award
Activities: Basketball Team (4 years)
Community Service: Holiday Gift and Basket Drive for Churches and Group Homes

Tarinda Rushing: 12th Grade, Burton Academic High School
GPA: 3.55
Academic Achievement: Who's Who in American High School Students, National Macy's Scholar, Presidential Academic Fitness Award
Activities: NASA Research Center Intern, UCSF Intern, Christmas Travel Exchange Student
Leadership: Class President, National Black Child Development Institute Representative
Community Service: Red Cross Volunteer, Recycling Program (Girl Scouts)

APPENDIX B

SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM EFFORTS TO SUPPORT THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS

Incentive Awards Program

In 1991 a unique partnership was established between UC Berkeley and the San Francisco Unified School District called the Incentive Awards Program which motivates high achieving, economically disadvantaged high school students and provides resources and support that enables them to achieve their highest goals.

Each year an outstanding student is selected from each of the district's thirteen UC-eligible high schools. The incentive is a $24,000 scholarship award and other financial aid. Each student is enrolled at UC Berkeley with an individually tailored support program on campus. Program administrators meet regularly with principals and counselors to evaluate the program's impact, discuss methodology, and seek opportunities for program enhancement. UC Berkeley's Admissions Office provides oversight to the entire selection process and support to the Selection Committee that is comprised of a revolving group of ten business and community leaders who serve on the program's Advisory Committee.

The goal of the Incentive Award Program is to encourage as many students as possible to value academic achievement and to provide them with the incentives to overcome the obstacles in their paths. The Incentive Awards Scholars are young people who have overcome financial hardship, language barriers, dysfunctional families, and violent neighborhoods. They are each heroes.

Currently, the African American population in the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) comprises 16 percent of the students. Of the SFUSD graduates

attending University of California at Berkeley (UCB) in the last four years 3 percent are African American. However, 16 percent of the 54 Incentive Award Students at UCB are African American and all are on a path to graduation.

University of California (Berkeley)
The Academic Talented Development Program (ATDP)

This is a summer program that began in 1986 with eleven (11) academically talented minority students. For the last three years the program has enrolled 120, 150, and 160 students. The students are selected from grades seven through high school at eighteen San Francisco Unified School District middle and high schools. This year the program is year round with ongoing support for students. The students take rigorous courses in writing and literature, foreign language, computer science, advanced mathematics, social sciences, and biological and physical science at the University of California Berkeley campus. The program is approximately 85 percent African American and Latino students and their academic achievement is impressive.

The determination of the students and their educational vision contributes to their increased ability to benefit from the support of their teachers, mentors/tutors, and counselors.

The I.R.I.S.E. Initiative

Infusing **R**esponsibilities for **I**ntellectual and **S**cholastic **E**xcellence (I.R.I.S.E.), a language and math literacy intervention program, was designed to improve the performance of San Francisco's 2nd-8th grade African American students in the lowest quartile, as well as increase professional development for teachers and administrators and demonstrate community support for public education.

The project serves 74 classrooms in thirteen San Francisco schools. It begins with a selected set of classrooms and progresses toward a school-wide model. In cooperation with San Francisco State University's Center for Applied Cultural Studies and Educational

Achievement, each school completes the requisite training for teachers and administrators, and implements a curriculum of cultural awareness, language acquisition, and mathematics proficiency. By combining close teacher/student relationships, relevant and rigorous curriculums, and stimulating learning environments, high student achievement is being pursued.

The African American Retention Program for High School Students

This program is a cooperative venture between the City College of San Francisco, the San Francisco Unified District, and the San Francisco corporate sector. It was created to increase high school retention and graduation rates. The goals of the program include increased academic skills in mathematics, English, and study habits. Self esteem workshops help students realize the importance of remaining in and graduating from high school. The program also provides classes, workshops and employment information, resume writing, job search and job interviewing skills. Additionally, it provides guidance and information regarding transfer opportunities, admission and application information for four-year colleges, including traditional black colleges and universities. The program curriculum is designed to emphasize excellence, acceleration and success. Fundamental to the AAAP curriculum structure is the premise that students gain an understanding of the concerns that affect young people today.

Program Accomplishments: AAAP enrolls between 27-36 students each semester. AAAP has helped high schools students increase their grade point average range from 1.6 to 2.5- 2.8. Several students have a grade point average of 3.8 and higher. AAAP students are motivated to remain and graduate from their high schools. After graduation, 85 percent of AAAP students enroll in institutions of higher education. A small percentage of students enroll in San Francisco State University and historically black colleges and universities. AAAP students' high school verbal reading and writing skills are improved to college level entrance standards and students are prepared to take the

high school proficiency tests, SAT, and ACT. Students attitude regarding higher education are tremendously enhanced by this program.

YouthWorks Project

In an attempt to address the needs of many high school graduates who desire to go on to college, but cannot because of cost or the need to support their family, San Francisco Unified School District created two distinct programs that directly benefit African American youth. YouthWorks is designed to create a partnership between the District, the employment sector, post secondary education and the communities of San Francisco. Started in 1996 as one of the "school-to-career" programs, YouthWorks is sponsored by the Office of the Mayor and is designed to provide youth with paid internships in San Francisco city government. San Francisco Unified School District has joined in partnership with the Mayor's Advisory Committee on YouthWorks to further offer students the opportunity to earn high school credits toward graduation while learning how local government functions.

A special school-to-career initiative assisted United Airlines, United Parcel Service and American Protective Services in establishing 325 full and part-time positions for high school graduates, including entry level union jobs with health benefits and pension provisions.

African American Family Resource Center

San Francisco Unified School District's African American Family Resource Center will provide an array of programs and activities for families and caregivers in order to foster improved parental involvement in their children's education. Families will be assisted with acquiring the **knowledge** and **skill** needed to provide the highest level of nurturing to their children in order to **increase student success in school.**

The guiding principle of the Resource Center is **family empowerment** - that is - enabling families to build on their own strengths and capabilities to promote the healthy

development of children and giving families access to information and other resources enabling them to serve as advocates for their own families. The Resource Center, which is slated to open in late November after building renovations are completed, is located at 1550 Evans Street (at Third) on the first floor. It will house an educational resource library, multi-media center, conference room, student center, computer lab and staff offices.

In its first year, the Center will provide a workshop series featuring topics such as family literacy, building relationships, and strengthening school staff. Through raising self esteem and academic expectations, students will be prepared for college.

The Young African American Achievers Program

The Young African American Achievers Program model involving Jones United Methodist Church , Providence Baptist Church, San Francisco Christian Center, Bethel AME Church in concert with Ella Hill Hutch Community Center is a prototype of collaborative effort and typifies the role that can be played by the African American religious community. YAAP has been instrumental in supporting the quality of life of the African American community. Involvement includes churches, mosques, and temples making their underutilized facilities available for daycare and educational enrichment experiences for the children and the community. Through other community outreach efforts the religious organizations can help to provide educational experiences that involve the parents and their children. Ministers, pastors and the religious leadership are being sought as full partners in this effort.

APPENDIX C

SAN FRANCISCO
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEMBERS
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APPENDIX D

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